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Genesis and exodus as two formerly independent traditions of origins for Ancient Israel

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Abstract: This paper is a response to Joel Baden's article, which claims that the material in Genesis and Exodus was already literarily connected within the independent J and E documents. I suggest an alternative approach that has gained increased acceptance, especially in European scholarship. The ancestral stories of Genesis on the one hand and the Moses story in Exodus and the following books on the other hand were originally autonomous literary units, and it was only through P that they were connected conceptually and literarily.

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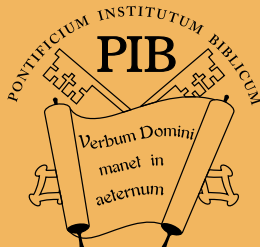
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Konrad SCHMID

*Genesis and Exodus as Two Formerly Independent Traditions
of Origins for Ancient Israel*



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Genesis and Exodus as Two Formerly Independent Traditions of Origins for Ancient Israel

It comes as a very welcome opportunity to be able to respond to some of the points raised by Joel Baden in his paper regarding the question of a continuous non-priestly narrative from Genesis to Exodus (see the preceding article in this fascicle). Before beginning my argument, I want to stress the fact that I come from a different academic culture than Joel Baden, and it is my conviction that the plausibility of individual exegetical theories not only depends on the strength of textual observations and their evaluations, but also on the respective intellectual framework of a specific scholar's situation. Of course, these frameworks are (or at least should be) always fluid and are influenced by the evidence and theories of a discipline. Nevertheless, as Schleiermacher noted, they also have an impact on the perception of the evidence and conclusions, and it is a difficult and nuanced process of adaptation between them that characterizes the task of biblical exegesis. I understand this dialogue with Baden as a contribution to this adaptation, and it is my hope that it helps to enhance the dialogue between our different academic cultures¹ and, above all, to illuminate the historical genesis of the Pentateuch.

I. Continuity in the non-priestly text from Genesis and Exodus as a default assumption?

Baden begins with the argument that the assumed gap between Genesis and Exodus “emerges from the development of tradition criticism from Noth to the present. On the textual level, however, in the canonical Pentateuch, there is no such division” (163)². What is the weight of this argument? First of all, it is quite apparent that the denial of any division between Genesis and Exodus is an overstatement

¹ See on this T.B. DOZEMAN et al. (eds.), *The Pentateuch. International Perspectives on Current Research* (FAT 78; Tübingen 2011).

² Page numbers between parentheses without further specification refer to J. Baden's article in this same issue of *Bib* 93 (2012).

and cannot be upheld. Already the double mentioning of Joseph's death in Gen 50,26 and Exod 1,6 shows that Genesis and Exodus, even on the level of the received text, have been shaped as two at least semi-independent literary units. The repetition of Joseph's death at the beginning of the book of Exodus attests to an undeniable division. It would make no sense to repeat an unrepeatable event like Joseph's death within six verses of a continuous narrative. Furthermore, in terms of their concerns, their theological shape, and their wording, Genesis and Exodus are indeed quite different. Genesis offers a family story; Exodus presents the story of a people. Genesis is mainly autochthonous and inclusive, while Exodus is allochthonous and exclusive. In the patriarchal narratives, Genesis constructs a picture of the origin of Israel in its own land, and the storyline is both theologically and politically inclusive. The gods of Canaan can be identified with YHWH, as can be deduced from the religious-historical background of cult legends like Gen 28,11-19 or Gen 32,23-33, and the patriarchs dwell together with the inhabitants of the land and make treaties with them. Exodus, on the other hand, stresses Israel's origin abroad in Egypt and puts forward an exclusively theological argument: YHWH is a jealous god that does not tolerate any other gods besides himself (Exod 20,3-5; 34,14), and the Israelites shall not make peace with the inhabitants of the land (cf. Exod 23,32-33; 34,12.15; Deut 12,29-31; 16,21; 20,16-17; 25,19). The theological substance of Genesis and Exodus is so divergent that it is unconvincing to conclude that there is no break whatsoever between these books ³.

Additionally, in response to Baden's observation that there is no distinction between Genesis and Exodus on the level of the canonical text, it is instructive to note that there is no distinction between P and non-P in the canonical Pentateuch either. Nevertheless, Baden and I agree that there is enough critical evidence to assume such a distinction in literary-historical terms. Whether or not there is a continuity in the canonical text is not the real problem. Much more significant is the question of the nature of this continuity. And here, in my opinion, the evidence as sketched out above is sufficiently clear. It was this kind of evidence that led to the above-mentioned development of pentateuchal criticism in the work of Noth, and even before Noth (e.g., Galling) ⁴, which relies on specific textual obser-

³ I have elaborated on this at length in my *Genesis and the Moses Story* (Siphrut 3; Winona Lake, IN 2009); see esp. 92-151.

⁴ K. GALLING, *Die Erwählungstraditionen Israels* (Gießen 1928).

vations, and not on “a scholarly imposition on the text” (163). It is thereby important to note that Noth left it open whether the traditions before the traditional sources J and E, especially their common source G, were oral or written ⁵. He even, and to my mind correctly, downplayed the significance of the written or oral nature of the traditions before their appearance in the traditional sources of the Pentateuch: “Die Frage, ob schriftlich oder mündlich, ist kaum noch mit einiger Sicherheit zu beantworten, aber auch überlieferungsgeschichtlich nicht so belangreich”. Important to him is the following aspect: “Die Tatsache selbst aber ist sehr wichtig, da sie ein der Abfassung der Quellenschriften J und E vorausliegendes Stadium im Werden in hinreichend sichtbare Erscheinung treten läßt” ⁶. Noth is speaking here of G, but this is also true for the so-called “major themes” of the Pentateuch that he ordered in the main part of this book according to their importance, starting with the exodus from Egypt and not the patriarchs. Indeed, Noth was of the opinion that the independence of the “major themes” was relegated to the oral stages of the transmission, but he would not have conceded that this diminishes the significance of their original self-contained nature and the importance of the process of how they grew together. Beyond Noth, I would however stress the necessity to check (1) whether the independence of the “major themes”, especially the patriarchs and the exodus, did extend to significantly later periods than he assumed and (2) whether this independence pertained to their literary fixation as well. My motivation to think so results primarily from the analysis of the connections between those “major themes”, which are (1) literary in nature and (2) seem to be secondary with respect to the textual material they link together.

The assumption of a literary-historical gap between Genesis and Exodus, accordingly, does not emerge from the later book division. It is rather the other way round. Because the traditions integrated and reworked in Genesis and Exodus were so diverse, the later division into books still reflects this divergence. The natural *caesura* has its afterlife still in the canonical text ⁷.

⁵ M. NOTH, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch* (Stuttgart 1948) 41.

⁶ NOTH, *Überlieferungsgeschichte*, 41.

⁷ In addition, Baden’s statement “Before the compilation of the canonical text, there was no such thing as the book of Genesis or the book of Exodus” (3-4) is not fully accurate, see SCHMID, *Genesis and the Moses Story*, 23-29. The literary “Wiederaufnahmen” at the book’s fringes attest to a proto-book

Therefore, I also disagree with Baden's contention that "the book of Genesis was never understood to be a literary work separate from the book of Exodus: there is no inner- or extra-biblical reference to Genesis or Exodus as an independent text — nor is there any inner- or extra-biblical reference to any part of Genesis or Exodus as an independent text" (164). This statement might be conceded only if it refers to the canonical book of Genesis, but it seems a bit bold to claim that there is no inner-biblical reference to any part of Genesis and Exodus as a possible or probable independent text. In my *Genesis and the Moses Story*, I have pointed to the Psalms and to the Prophets, where it seems reasonable to conclude that some of these texts apparently do not presume a continuous narrative from Genesis to Exodus⁸. Especially telling are the findings in the Psalms: except for Psalm 105, which probably presupposes the formation of the Pentateuch⁹, the ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not mentioned in any of the Psalms dealing with Israel's history (Psalms 77; 78; 106; 135; 136), which suggests that the Psalms were not always aware of a narrative continuity from Genesis to Exodus. And in the Prophets, there are texts like Hos 12,13-14; Mic 7,20; or Ezek 33,24 that point in the very same direction. We both agree that these texts refer to the patriarchs and to the exodus as separate traditions; the question, however, is whether it can be demonstrated that they refer to these traditions in terms of literary entities that are not yet connected in a narrative sequence. Texts like Hosea 12 and Micah 7 are difficult in this respect because the brevity of the allusions to the Genesis and the

formation before the end of their textual growth. To be sure, the question of "books" or "proto-books" is not limited to the Pentateuch, but needs to be extended to Genesis – Kings as a whole; see K. SCHMID, "The Emergence and Disappearance of the Separation between the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History in Biblical Studies", *Pentateuch, Hexateuch, or Enneateuch. Identifying Literary Works in Genesis through Kings* (eds. T.C. DOZEMAN – T. RÖMER – K. SCHMID) (SBL Ancient Israel and its Literature 8; Atlanta, GA 2011) 11-24.

⁸ See 70-80. See also J.-L. SKA, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch* (Winona Lake, IN 2006) 191-216; K. SCHMID, "Genesis in the Pentateuch", *The Book of Genesis. Composition, Reception, and Interpretation* (eds. C.A. EVANS – J.N. LOHR – D.L. PETERSEN) (VTS 152; Leiden 2012) 27-50.

⁹ See SCHMID, *Genesis and the Moses Story*, 291-292.

Exodus material, and the uncertainty of the dating of these prophetic texts make it almost impossible to reach a convincing result.

Most striking, however, is Ezek 33,24 because this text is late enough to presume a written Abraham tradition. It shows that the patriarchal story could be used as the basis for an independent argument by those who remained in the land after 597 and 587 BCE. In addition, Ezek 20,5-6 demonstrates that the same book can start its recounting of Israel's history in Egypt, starting with the exodus. Baden states: "In a variety of contexts, with a variety of references, the book of Ezekiel makes evident its familiarity with the patriarchal story in addition to its evident reliance on the exodus" (180). Ezek 20,5-6 and 33,24 could of course be interpreted as alluding to the themes within the allegedly already existent literary complex of Genesis-Exodus (and following), as the prophetic books were not necessarily beholden to any fixed textual corpuses when alluding to biblical topics. But in the case of Ezek 33,24, the specific contours in the way Abraham is referred to seem especially to highlight the land promises in the Abraham cycle. Of course, the question of the historical origins of the promises to the patriarchs is a contested one. In my opinion, one of the earliest promises in Genesis 12-50 can be found in the Abraham stories, in Genesis 18. The promise of a son belongs to the core of the story of the three strangers visiting Abraham, because this genre of anonymously visiting deities, well known also from the Greek and Latin world, necessarily includes the presentation of a gift, which in the case of Genesis 18 is the promise of a son. Nevertheless, the promise of the land is a different issue. It is, first of all, never an indissoluble constituent of the narratives where it is found. It instead belongs to the redactional links between the individual stories and cycles in Genesis 12-50. Secondly, in historical terms, it probably presumes the loss of the land, i.e., at least the fall of Samaria in 720 B.C.E., but probably also that of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E. In other words, the promises of the land are not an original part of the individual patriarchal narratives, but these promises instead bring about their literary coherence as a unit. For our purposes most important is the following aspect: their conceptual horizon does not extend beyond the book of Genesis, except for the specific version of the land promise as an oath that is present in nearly every book of the Pentateuch (Gen 50,24; Exod 32,13; 33,1; Num 32,11; Deut 34,4) but does not occur afterwards. It is therefore probably best to understand the motif of the land

promise as oath as part of the final redaction of the Pentateuch ¹⁰. I am aware that Baden thinks otherwise about the promises, but if one is willing to follow the road sketched above, then Ezek 33,24 is a valuable candidate for a witness to the literary independence of the patriarchal story as a textual unit because Ezek 33,24 uses the precise theological argument of the, in my mind, originally (and still at the time of Ezek 33,24) literary independent patriarchal story.

To be sure, these texts from outside the Pentateuch do not constitute compelling evidence regarding the original independence of Genesis and Exodus, but such evidence should not be expected for a problem like the formation of the Hebrew Bible. Rather, it increases the probability that the material now found in the books of Genesis and Exodus presupposes earlier literary stages that were not yet connected as a continuous narrative.

It is crucial to maintain that there is no “a priori distinction between the patriarchs and the exodus” in my argument, as Baden puts it. On the contrary, this distinction is *a posteriori* and is founded on several observations such as, just to summarize a few, the evidence of the links between those two textual bodies, on the nature of the promises of land in Genesis which do not seem to envision a detour to Egypt and a time span of several hundred years in order to be fulfilled ¹¹, and the extra-pentateuchal evidence that some Psalms and some passages in the Prophets refer to themes of Genesis and Exodus. This is what I have argued at length in my *Genesis and the Moses Story*, which starts with a description of the present canonical narrative from Genesis through Kings! This is the starting point, and the differentiation between Genesis and Exodus is a result, not a presupposition.

¹⁰ See in more detail K. SCHMID “The Late Persian Formation of the Torah: Observations on Deuteronomy 34”, *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* (eds. O. LIPSCHITS – G.N. KNOPPERS – R. ALBERTZ) (Winona Lake, IN 2007) 236-245.

¹¹ Cf. the formulations “to you” (Gen 13,17) or “to you and to your descendants” (13,15; 28,13). Baden correctly points out that the P promises in Gen 17,8; 28,4; 35,12 exhibit the same feature. However, P has a different understanding of the possession of the land, as P’s terminology אֶרֶץ מְרִכָּה shows. The land is not given to the patriarchs as a property, it rather remains God’s own property, which can be used by the patriarchs, see M. BAUKS, “Die Begriffe מְרִכָּה und אֶרֶץ מְרִכָּה in P^s. Überlegungen zur Landkonzeption der Priestergrundschrift”, *ZAW* 116 (2004) 171-188.

In methodological terms, I do not agree with either alternative Baden is proposing: “Thus rather than assume that the patriarchs and exodus were originally separate in the non-priestly text and then look for some pristine explicit verbal link to prove it (a verbal link that looks similar to that in the priestly narrative), we ought rather to work from the assumption that the non-priestly text is in fact continuous, and then — entirely in isolation from the priestly text — appreciate the historical claims in the non-priestly text that are consistent across its whole” (165). In my opinion, we should not start with any assumption regarding the continuity or discontinuity between Genesis and Exodus, but assess the textual evidence and then evaluate whether or not this points to an original continuity on the textual level or not. Following one of Baden’s examples, of course it is clear that one should assume an original continuity between Exodus and Leviticus (see Exod 40,38; Lev 1,1), but such a perspective is much better founded for this case than in the transition from Genesis to Exodus (see Exod 1,6.8).

Finally, I am glad to find myself in agreement with Baden regarding the assumption “that the verbal links between the patriarchs and the exodus in this section of P are considerably denser and more explicit than in the equivalent non-P text” (163). In his *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch*, he had maintained as an overall statement: “the J and E documents are *no less coherent* [emphasis K.S.] in the continuity of their historical claims and narrative details than P”¹². Baden is ready to restate this general assumption in order to acknowledge, at least for the verbal links in Exodus 1–6, the different quality of P and non-P with regard to the connection between the patriarchs and the exodus. However, he still maintains that those blocks are linked in J and E in a comparably strong way, although not through explicit cross references. I would assign more weight to these cross references and less to thematic correspondences. In my thinking, it is especially this overall impression of a much stronger density of P’s coherence in terms of its verbal links throughout both Genesis and Exodus when compared to the non-P texts that is, again, not a compelling argument, but a strong hint supporting the assumption that the pre-priestly traditions in Genesis and in Exodus were not linked to each other from the outset.

¹² J. BADEN, *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch* (FAT 68; Tübingen 2009) 3.

II. The Joseph Story as a bridge between the patriarchs and the exodus?

Having said this, I still agree with Baden that continuity is not only established by explicit verbal links between two textual corpora. Nevertheless, Baden is overstating the evidence of Genesis 37–50 when he writes: “The entire narrative is built on the premise that Joseph’s descent to Egypt and rise to power there paved the way — through the behind-the-scenes workings of divine providence — for the rest of Jacob’s family to migrate to Egypt” (167). Of course, in the current textual flow of the Pentateuch, the Joseph story indeed explains how Israel came to Egypt in order to leave from there under the guidance of Moses. But there are several elements in Genesis 37–50 that reveal that this is only true for the canonical shape of the Joseph story. And even on this literary level, it is an overstatement to claim that “the entire narrative” is only aimed towards the *eisodos* theme which is preparing the exodus. First of all, the differences between Genesis 12–36 and 37–50 show that the Joseph story apparently was a literary fixed piece in its own right before having been incorporated into the book of Genesis. Rachel’s death is reported in Gen 35,18–20; she is supposed to be alive in Gen 37,8. In Genesis 12–36, only Dinah shows up as Jacob’s daughter; Gen 37,35 mentions several sons and daughters. Jacob’s sons have children of their own in Genesis 37–50 as opposed to Genesis 12–36; Joseph is introduced in 37,3 as son born to Jacob when already quite old, which is not presupposed in Genesis 30–31. Reuben and Simeon, who are presented as compromised in Gen 34,30; 35,22 take positive roles in Genesis 37–50. All these differences are not very important in terms of the narrative, but especially their unpretentious quality suggests that the Joseph story was a literary entity unto itself before having been attached to Genesis 12–36 and subsequently filled out as a bridge to the exodus material¹³.

The differences between Genesis 37–50 and Exodus 1–15 point in the same direction. The depictions of Israel and Pharaoh are so

¹³ See for more detail K. SCHMID, “Die Josephsgeschichte im Pentateuch”, *Abschied vom Jahwisten. Die Komposition des Hexateuch in der jüngsten Diskussion* (eds. J.C. GERTZ – K. SCHMID – M. WITTE) (BZAW 315; Berlin – New York 2002) 83–118; R.G. KRATZ, *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament* (London – New York 2005) 274–279.

different in Genesis 37–50 on the one hand and in Exodus 1–15 on the other that it is hardly plausible to assume the former are from the outset narrative preparations for the latter and that their literary basis is a common one. Joseph is described as a distinguished man in the Egyptian court (see Gen 41,37–46) and favored by Pharaoh, which then becomes true of his family once they relocate to Egypt. The Israelites at the beginning of the book of Exodus, in contrast, are portrayed as maliciously treated manual laborers similar to those usually taken as prisoners of war. The wise and good pharaoh of Genesis is exchanged for a cruel despot abusing the Israelites and keeping them in check in Exodus ¹⁴. It is hard to see how these divergences can be explained when it is assumed that the story was never to fulfill any other function than preparing for the exodus story. If the authors of the Joseph story, according to Baden J and E, wrote it just to link the patriarchal and the exodus stories, why should they introduce such significant tensions into the narrative flow, only to straighten them out again at the beginning of the book of Exodus in a rather unconvincing manner?

Rather, as Exod 1,8 (“a new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph”) demonstrates, these two narrative blocks seem to have been joined only secondarily. Baden also tries to interpret Exod 1,8 so that this verse supports his position. According to him, this text demands “that the reader know the patriarchal stories and the Joseph story in some detail” (168). True, but from a historical perspective it is also clear that the author of Exod 1,8 recognized that Exodus 1–15 is not a fitting continuation of Genesis 37–50. In order to compensate he inserted the short notice stating that the king was unaware of everything that was known about Joseph. Indeed, Exod 1,8 has a direct knowledge of both Genesis 12–50 and Exodus 1–15 and presupposes both texts, but at the same time Exod 1,8 is a clear witness to the divergence of the literary traditions its author had before him. This verse is nothing other than what the textbooks on exegetical methods refer to as a secondary clamp, i.e., redactional formulations connecting two formerly independent texts ¹⁵.

¹⁴ See SCHMID, *Genesis and the Moses Story*, 6.

¹⁵ See O.H. STECK, *Old Testament Exegesis. A Guide to Methodology* (SBL Resources for Biblical Study 39; Atlanta, GA ²1998) 54, German original: “Sekundäre Verklammerungen”, O.H. STECK, *Exegese des Alten Testaments. Leitfaden der Methodik* (Neukirchen-Vluyn ¹⁴1999) 54.

Of course, there are anticipatory references to the exodus in Genesis 37–50, such as Gen 48,21 or 50,22, as Baden correctly maintains. The question is just whether they are pre- or post-priestly. Baden states only that they are non-priestly (166, n. 9) which is true, but does not help further with the problem we are dealing with.

Because Baden discusses only textual elements that speak for the continuity of Genesis and Exodus, the final comment in his section “continuity in non-P” is easily understood: “As noted above, in a continuous document there is no pressing need to explicitly link the various textual units, as they are linked merely by virtue of being part of the same continuous story. P’s decision to create a clear verbal link in Exodus 1–6 is a thematic and stylistic choice, one that fits well with P’s style and ideology everywhere” (173). This would be a convincing conclusion if there would be no evidence that runs contrary to this assumption. But there is. To put it bluntly, the difference between Baden’s and my evaluation regarding textual continuity or discontinuity between Genesis and Exodus is, at least from my own perspective, not that Baden is arguing for the former and I am arguing for the latter, but that I am assuming elements both of continuity and discontinuity, and I am organizing them in a literary-historical order. Narrative continuity between Genesis and Exodus materials seems to be extant only in P and post-P texts. Baden, on the other hand, holds that there is a logical and sufficient continuity from the very beginning of the literary history of Genesis and Exodus. According to him, there never, not even in the earliest literary layers, was a Genesis story of the patriarchs independent from the Moses story and vice versa. Or, put in another way, the basic literary layer in Genesis and Exodus is a continuous one. Baden argues for the integrity of J in the narrative flow from Genesis to Exodus. My position is that J in Genesis and J in Exodus should be held apart from each other and thus should not be named J.

It is important to see how this position of Baden’s relates to the history of scholarship. His assumptions in this respect comply neither fully with the beliefs of Wellhausen, nor of Gunkel, nor of Noth, all of whom allowed for literary precursors of their “J” that eventually linked the pentateuchal traditions into their commonly known literary order¹⁶. Baden, therefore, is not a documentarian in the clas-

¹⁶ See K. SCHMID, “Has European Scholarship Abandoned the Documentary Hypothesis? Some Reminders on Its History and Remarks on Its Current Sta-

sis sense, but he simplifies the traditional Documentary Hypothesis by reducing it to just the four sources and one compiler. This may be elegant in terms of a literary description, but seems inadequate in terms of likelihood of development from oral traditions to literary sources¹⁷. Apparently, Baden seems to accept independent oral versions (163), but between the oral prehistory and the sources of the Pentateuch, there are no intermediate stages. Baden considers this to be an advantage of his theory; I don't think that such an assumption complies with the complex findings in the Pentateuch, which point to the existence of fixed literary entities like the Abraham cycle, the Jacob cycle, the Joseph story, or the Moses story, and in some instances even to small literary units like the Bethel story (Gen 28,11-19) or the Table of Nations in Genesis 10.

III. Non-priestly, either pre-priestly or post-priestly?

Baden mentions a couple of non-priestly texts in Exodus – Numbers that, according to him, clearly presuppose the Genesis narratives. I do not object to this characterization in general, but I seriously doubt whether texts like Exodus 3; 32,26-29 or Num 20,14-16 are necessarily pre-priestly. Of course they are non-priestly, but Baden sticks here with the basic assumptions of the Documentary Hypothesis that non-priestly essentially equals pre-priestly¹⁸. Such an assumption could be a possible result of pentateuchal exegesis, but it cannot by any means function as an *a priori* conviction, or a position that deserves special favor or disfavor. It is just one option among others, and it must be decided by exegetical means whether it is plausible in each case. I don't want to repeat the arguments that have been put forward by recent scholarship as to a possible post-priestly ori-

tus", *The Pentateuch*. International Perspectives on Current Research (eds. T.B. DOZEMAN – K. SCHMID – B.J. SCHWARTZ) (FAT 78; Tübingen 2011) 17-30.

¹⁷ Even L. SCHMIDT, "Die vorpriesterliche Verbindung von Erzvätern und Exodus durch die Josefsgeschichte (Gen 37; 39-50*) und Exodus 1", *ZAW* 124 (2012) 19-37, a sound defender of the Documentary Hypothesis, claims that J presupposed and incorporated a well-defined written Joseph story, ending with Gen 50,22, in his own work.

¹⁸ See E. OTTO, "Forschungen zum nachpriesterschriftlichen Pentateuch", *TRu* 67 (2002) 125-155.

gin of Exodus 3; 32,26-29; or Num 20,14-16¹⁹. They will not be conclusive enough to convince a documentarian, but, seen in another framework, they still provide some important observations and raise the probability of a late origin.

Of course, Baden recognizes the possible circularity of the argument regarding the notion of post-priestly redactional texts: “because if the priestly document was the first to connect the patriarchs and the exodus, then every non-priestly connection between the two must have occurred after P by definition” (173-174). But this is not how the proponents of a post-priestly connection between Genesis and Exodus argue. The argument is not built up from the expected result, but the relevant texts are examined for signs of post-priestly provenance. If Baden writes with regard to the alleged post-priestly passages: “First, they show neither agreement with nor even knowledge of the priestly texts on which they are purportedly based” (175), then the expectation of the first point is mistaken and the evidence regarding the second one is unwarranted. Post-priestly texts, as is true for virtually all redactional additions in the Hebrew Bible, usually elaborate, correct, or modify pre-existing texts, be they priestly, or non-priestly, or both. If they were just in agreement with the priestly texts they rely on, then there would have been no need for them to have been written. Of course, there are differences between P and post-priestly additions as Baden describes on pp. 174-175 above, and these differences are nothing other than what is to be expected. That such post-priestly texts show no knowledge of P is an unproven assumption that, in the cases of Genesis 15 and (at least parts)²⁰ of Exodus 3-4 can easily be rejected, both texts take up the thematic, the order, and even some of the wording of their P counterparts in Genesis 17 and Exodus 6²¹. To be sure, they do not fully concur with those P texts. The reason for this lies in their nature as redactional texts: they modify pre-existing material.

¹⁹ See J.C. GERTZ, “Beobachtungen zu Komposition und Redaktion in Exodus 32-34”, *Gottes Volk am Sinai*. Untersuchungen zu Ex 32-34 und Dtn 9-10 (eds. M. KÖCKERT – E. BLUM) (VWGT 18; Gütersloh 2001) 88-106, and the references in my *Genesis and the Moses Story*, 66-67; 172-182.

²⁰ See e.g. T. RÖMER, “Exodus 3-4 und die aktuelle Pentateuchdiskussion”, *The Interpretation of Exodus*. Studies in Honour of Cornelis Houtman (eds. R. ROUKEMA et al.) (CBET 44; Leuven 2006) 65-79.

²¹ See SCHMID, *Genesis and the Moses Story*, 166-171, 182-193.

Baden's strong rhetoric that the "supposedly post-priestly passages agree entirely with the non-priestly text in which they are now embedded" or that they "are completely in line with the non-priestly text (176)" — note the qualifications "entirely" and "completely" — require direct support from the texts. From my perspective, Genesis 15 never really fits the paradigm of the Documentary Hypothesis. Furthermore, Exodus 3–4 was seen by Martin Noth as an "addition in J" (!)²². Finally, Genesis 22 would be another example. In addition, Genesis 15 and 22 were both traditionally deemed to be E texts and both employ the Tetragrammaton, which is not really supportive of such an assignment (see e.g. Gen 15,1; Gen 22,11.14-16), although Baden does not assign texts to E primarily on the basis of their use of "Elohim"; he also takes other elements into account. To my mind Genesis 15; 22 and Exodus 3–4 are post-priestly texts that presuppose P and are not in line with other non-priestly texts²³. Furthermore, the assumption whereby Baden seems to reduce the notion of post-P texts to "one" thoroughgoing post-Priestly redactional layer in the Pentateuch requires critical discussion. Again, such an assumption might be a possible result, but if the literary evidence suggests otherwise, and I think it does, then a variety of post-priestly texts with different literary horizons and different theological conceptions needs to be distinguished²⁴. As a result, it is only to be expected that these post-P texts differ in terms of their theological profile, their language and their relation to P. Baden's own alternative seems inconclusive to me: "The passages that link the non-priestly patriarchal and exodus narratives — which demonstrate no knowledge of P, which contradict P regularly, and which are entirely in accord with the non-priestly text — make the best sense, there-

²² M. NOTH, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (Chico, CA 1981) 31-32, n. 103.

²³ For Genesis 15 and Exodus 3–4 see the arguments below and, in more detail, SCHMID, *Genesis and the Moses Story*, 158-182, for Genesis 22 see K. SCHMID, "Die Rückgabe der Verheißungsgabe. Der 'heilsgeschichtliche' Sinn von Genesis 22 im Horizont innerbiblischer Exegese", *Gott und Mensch im Dialog*. Festschrift Otto Kaiser (ed. M. WITTE) (BZAW 345/I; Berlin – New York 2004) 271-300.

²⁴ The recent study of C. BERNER, *Die Exoduserzählung*. Das literarische Werden einer Ursprungslegende Israels (FAT 73; Tübingen 2010), however, oversteps the evidence; see my review in *ZAW* 123 (2010) 292-294.

fore, as part of an independent non-priestly text” (178-179). I strongly disagree. If we have a look at the most important texts in this respect, Genesis 15 and Exodus 3–4, then Genesis 15 can be convincingly interpreted as a reception of Genesis 17 (P). The same is true for Exodus 3–4 with regard to Exod 6,2-8 (P). These texts demonstrate intimate knowledge of P, but, as reinterpretations, they also differ conceptually from P. Let’s first have a look at Genesis 15. The wording of Gen 15,14-15 (*rkš; šybh twbh*) uses language that is characteristic for P (cf. Gen 12,5; 13,6; 31,18; 46,6 and 25,8), Abraham’s exodus out of Ur of the Chaldeans (Gen 15,7) is reminiscent of Gen 11,28 (P); the interpretation of the donation of the land as “covenant” (Gen 15,18) is otherwise only attested in P texts (Gen 17,7-8; Exod 6,4). I do not think it is simpler to explain away these connections than to concede them. In terms of content, the similarity of Genesis 15 to Genesis 17 is also striking. Abraham receives a promise of progeny. But his reaction is different: in Genesis 17, he laughs, in Genesis 15, he believes. In my opinion, it is easier to interpret Genesis 15 as an orthodox reception of Genesis 17 than to interpret Genesis 17 as a heterodox reception of Genesis 15. To deny any process of reception between the two texts as a third alternative seems to be the least convincing option given their thematic similarities and their literary proximity.

In Exod 3,7.9, there are close links to the wording of Exod 2,23-25 (P). The cry of the Israelites in Exod 3,7.9 that YHWH hears has previously only been reported in Exod 2,23b. But above all, the theme of Exodus 3–4 is the same as in Exod 6,2-8. What is especially striking is that Exodus 3–4 integrates the problems that Exodus 6 unfolds in a narrative way after the call of Moses. The narrative account of the Israelite people not listening to Moses in Exod 6 is stated as a problem by Moses in Exodus 3, even though he has not yet talked to the Israelites. In addition Exodus 3 changes the location of the call of Moses to the holy mountain, which is more likely to be a secondary setting for the commission of Moses when compared to its location in the land of Egypt in Exodus 6²⁵.

According to Baden’s most recent publication, we seem to agree at least on the assumption that the compilation of the sources of the Pentateuch was not the last step in its composition: “The Docu-

²⁵ See the detailed discussion in SCHMID, *Genesis and the Moses Story*, 66-71, 182-192.

mentary Hypothesis does not deny that each source has a history, nor does it deny that the Pentateuch itself has a history after the compilation of the documents”²⁶. From my point of view, this statement is of crucial importance. If it is true that there is a literary history of the Pentateuch before and after the sources, however they are being determined — and to my mind there can be no doubt about that — then such a statement is a significant step towards a convergence between Baden and me.

IV. The “fathers” in Deuteronomy

Baden further adduces another corpus of alleged pre-exilic origin, D, in order to consolidate the assumption of a pre-priestly narrative continuity from Genesis to Exodus. He sees in all parts of D the notion that the “fathers,” if they are not specified explicitly as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are — not exclusively, but also — referring to the patriarchs in Genesis all the same, rather than just to the exodus generation, as some scholars have argued. If so, D would bolster the argument for a pre-exilic literary sequence from the patriarchs to the exodus. The problems involved in such an argument are, however, complex. The discussion about the original identity of the fathers in the book of Deuteronomy has a long history. As early as 1972, John Van Seters suspected that the term in many but not all instances does not refer to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but to the exodus generation. In 1990 Thomas Römer supported this hypothesis with a substantial monograph²⁷. The issue is, admittedly, an open and contested one²⁸, but it would be shortsighted to interpret the characterization of all explicit identifications of the “father” with the patriarchs from Genesis as secondary — the result of “an attempt to keep all connections between the patriarchs and exodus out of the pre-priestly literature” (184).

²⁶ J.S. BADEN, *The Composition of the Pentateuch* (AB Reference Library; New Haven, CT 2012) 248.

²⁷ J. VAN SETERS, “Confessional Reformulation in the Exilic Period”, *VT* 22 (1972) 448-459; T. RÖMER, *Israels Väter. Untersuchungen zur Väterthematik im Deuteronomium und in der deuteronomistischen Tradition* (OBO 99; Fribourg – Göttingen 1990).

²⁸ See esp. N. LOHFINK, *Die Väter Israels im Deuteronomium. Mit einer Stellungnahme von Thomas Römer* (OBO 111; Fribourg – Göttingen 1991).

There are other observations that are relevant here, and especially John Van Seters would not intend to deny a literary connection between Genesis and Exodus in the pre-priestly literature, although he did so for the pre-deuteronomistic literature. At any rate, he challenges, in my mind correctly, the notion that the patriarchal stories and the exodus narrative were combined from the very beginning of Israel's tradition history.

Already Baden's starting point for his argument is questionable because "D" is an exegetical assumption implying a specific historical setting. Apparently, for Baden, texts like Deuteronomy 1–3; 4; 5–11; 12–26; etc. all belong to the same literary corpus, i.e., "D", originating from the monarchic period. To put it cautiously, this is a very bold presupposition. Just to pick out some examples: there are good reasons to see Deuteronomy 4 as a post-priestly section in its context. Michael Fishbane earlier argued for the dependence of at least Deut 4,16–19 on Gen 1,1–2,4a²⁹, and the historical summaries in Deut 10,22 and 26,5 (referred to by Baden on p. 184) are not very likely to be pre-Priestly texts either³⁰. It will, however, be difficult to reach a consensus about the redaction history of the book of Deuteronomy, but I would insist, against Baden's position, that Deuteronomy includes a significant number of textual portions that belong to the exilic and Persian periods³¹. Therefore, the argument that possible references to the "fathers" always implied the patriarchs and are scattered throughout the book does not carry much weight. For the final shape of the book of Deuteronomy, it is clear that the reader should identify the "fathers" with the patriarchs of Genesis, but this is a canonical and not a literary-historical understanding of the book.

To further support such a historical differentiation, it is especially helpful to broaden the horizon beyond the book of Deuteronomy. In the "Deuteronomistic corpus" from Joshua to Kings, there are only

²⁹ M. FISHBANE, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford 1985) 321–322.

³⁰ On Deut 26,5 see esp. J.C. GERTZ, "Die Stellung des kleinen geschichtlichen Credo in der Redaktionsgeschichte von Deuteronomium und Pentateuch", *Liebe und Gebot. Studien zum Deuteronomium. Festschrift für Luther Perlt* (eds. R.G. KRATZ – H. SPIECKERMANN) (FRLANT 190; Göttingen 2000) 30–45; SKA, *Introduction*, 196–197; for both texts T. RÖMER, "Nachwort", N. LOHFINK, *Die Väter Israels*, 120–121.

³¹ See e.g. E. OTTO, "Deuteronomium", *RGG*⁴ II, 693–696; SCHMID, "The Late Persian Formation of the Torah", 236–245.

two references to the three patriarchs of Genesis — 1 Kgs 18,36 and 2 Kgs 23,23. Meanwhile, there are plenty of allusions to and mentions of the exodus as the beginning of Israel's history with its God. In the Psalms, the term "fathers" never refers to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and, on the other hand, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are never identified as "fathers." It seems striking that the explicit identification of the patriarchs of Genesis as "fathers" within the large narrative Genesis – Kings occurs only in the Torah, but never in the Former Prophets. Apparently, such an identification was part of a redactional process that was concerned with the formation of the Torah. Ezek 20,5-6 and Ezek 33,24 are witnesses for the earlier possibility that the exodus and the fathers could be used as the sources for different arguments regarding the possession of the land ³².

There is one important specification to add. The redaction-historical differentiation about whom the term "fathers" in Deuteronomy refers to does not imply that the older layers in Deuteronomy did not know anything about Genesis and the patriarchs. Rather, as in Hosea 12, they argued for the exodus tradition as Israel's relevant myth of origin in opposition to the patriarchal stories.

V. Are the patriarchal and the exodus stories incomplete?

Baden expresses some doubts as to whether literarily independent patriarchal and exodus stories are conceivable at all. First, he deems the patriarchal story with its promises as incomplete:

The premise of the independent patriarchal narrative is that it would have been an account of how Israel came to possess the land of Canaan through the internal spread of Abraham's descendants, without any descent to Egypt, exodus, wilderness wandering, or conquest from without. Yet the patriarchal narrative does not tell that story. If the promises are included as part of the original non-priestly patriarchal narrative, then the text is certainly incomplete (185).

This argument might be plausible for readers who posit the canonical story line of the Pentateuch as a given framework for un-

³² This was VAN SETERS's first example in his "Confession Reformulation in the Exilic Period", 448-449.

derstanding its different parts. But the notion of open promises *per se* is not a problem within the context of biblical literature; otherwise the books of Isaiah or Jeremiah would need to be characterized as being incomplete too. Baden expects an independent non-priestly patriarchal story to narrate how the forefathers of Israel came into possession of the land — why should they? If we distinguish between the world of the narrative and the world of the narrators, then it makes perfect sense in historical terms to reckon with a patriarchal story containing open, unfulfilled promises. Of course, such a notion is especially plausible when the patriarchal stories as structured by the promises are seen in a post-720 or post-587 B.C.E. historical context. Once the land is lost, it can become the subject of promises. Outside the Pentateuch, the texts in Deutero-Isaiah, for example, seem to presuppose exactly such a theological shape for the patriarchal story. Deutero-Isaiah makes a clear distinction between the exodus tradition that has become obsolete and is no longer to be remembered (Isa 43,16-21) and the patriarchal tradition that remains a valid and reliable theological argument (see, e.g., Isa 41,8-10). Why is this distinction necessary? Due to the loss of the land in the wake of the catastrophe in 587 B.C.E, the exodus tradition lost its theological significance; it has been nullified. This is different for the patriarchal tradition; because it contains an open promise of the land, it still can be propagated as a valid theological perspective.

But does the end of the book of Genesis, which plays out in Egypt, not demonstrate that it was aimed at a continuation in the book of Exodus? In diachronic terms, it bears little significance that the present text of Genesis 50 concludes in Egypt. As such, Genesis 50 constitutes a bridge to the following exodus story. The question, however, is: how old, in terms of literary history, is this bridge? I do not want to present possible solutions to that problem here, but suffice it to say that the problem of the textual growth of Genesis 50 is a debated one³³. And as Genesis and Exodus in their present shape are linked as a continuous narrative, it is only to be expected that the fringes of these books were reworked in order to fit together.

In addition, Baden also thinks that the exodus story cannot do without Genesis as introduction: “Similarly, the non-priestly exo-

³³ See e.g. J.C. GERTZ, “The Transition between the Books of Genesis and Exodus”, *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (eds. T.B. DOZEMAN – K. SCHMID) (SBL SympS 34; Atlanta, GA 2006) 73-87.

dus narrative is incomplete on its own. It begins with the Israelite people enslaved in a foreign country — yet how did these foreigners get to Egypt? Who are they? Why does God care about them? The exodus narrative presumes that the reader knows the background to the exodus story. And that background is provided in the story of the patriarchs: the lineage of the family, their descent into Egypt, the establishment of their relationship with God” (185). But there is no need to postulate an *eisodos* exposition for an exodus story, especially when taking into account the biblical evidence. Texts such as Deut 6,21-23; Ezek 20,5-26; Amos 2,10; Hos 2,17; 11,1-11; 12,10.14; 13,4; Ps 78,12-72; 106,6-8; 136,10-15 demonstrate that the Hebrew Bible can speak of the origins of the people of Israel in Egypt and the exodus without referring to how they came to be there. Israel is Israel from Egypt, as many formulaic expressions in the Bible show. To assume that this story is only understandable by referring to the Joseph story is already falsified by the case of P, which does not have a Joseph story, at least according to the usual delimitations of P in Genesis 37–50³⁴. Of course, there are clear links in the non-priestly text between the patriarchal and exodus narratives, as Baden correctly states (170-172) and illustrates by examples such as Exod 3,6.15.16; 8,18; 9,26 (cf. Gen 45,10); 32,26-29; Num 20,14-16. But these observations would only be valid as arguments for a pre-priestly narrative continuing from Genesis to Exodus if these non-priestly links could be proven to be indeed of pre-priestly origin which is, at least in the international context of pentateuchal discussions, contentious, as I have discussed more closely in the previous section.

VI. Economical theories versus historical plausibilities

For Baden, it seems very important to opt for the simplest and most economic solution when different alternatives are available: “It certainly seems the most economical solution to see the exodus account as the necessary continuation of the patriarchs, and the patriarchs as the necessary introduction of the exodus” (186). Concerning

³⁴ See on this in detail K. SCHMID, “The So-Called Yahwist and the Literary Gap between Genesis and Exodus”, *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (eds. T.B. DOZEMAN – K. SCHMID) (SBL SympS 34; Atlanta, GA 2006) 29-50.

this point, it is, in my mind, important to stress that there are several possible virtues in the world of scientific theories. Simplicity or economy is certainly one. Especially when dealing with historical questions, however, simplicity is not what one should necessarily expect. In order to develop a historically adequate theory on the composition of the Pentateuch, one has to take into account the possibilities and limitations of the literary culture of ancient Israel and Judah that can be deduced through comparisons with findings from ancient Near Eastern literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls. These elements do not suggest that an easy solution to the question how the Pentateuch was composed is to be expected. Rather, we need to reckon with individual glosses in the text (e.g. Gen 28,19b), with additions to smaller pericopes that are limited in their scope (e.g. Gen 22,15-18), with redactional insertions binding together larger units (e.g. Gen 28,13-15), and also literary structures with the entire Pentateuch or even the Hexateuch in view (Gen 50,24-25; Exod 13,19). Admittedly, such a picture is more complex than what Baden suggests, but it agrees with findings from other parts of the Hebrew Bible and also from extrabiblical literature. Most important, it complies with the books of Genesis and Exodus themselves.

VII. Biblical reading versus historically-differentiated reading of the Bible

Baden's reconstruction of the pentateuchal sources prior to P is to a large degree unwittingly inspired by P and the redactor who combined P and non-P into a certain form of a proto-Pentateuch (R^P). P and R^P intended the reader of the Pentateuch to understand the story their way, and centuries of Jewish and Christian exegesis followed their proposal; they perceived the Pentateuch predominantly in terms of P's storyline. This perspective continued to dominate the reconstruction of the earlier sources of the Pentateuch with the appearance of historical criticism. J and E were thought to be forerunners to P, telling the same story as P, so P was identified as an epigone. In my opinion, there is sufficient evidence, however, that P is the beginning, and not the end, of the creative process that eventually led to the now known storyline of the Pentateuch³⁵. The difference between

³⁵ See on this especially A. DE PURY, "P^g as the Absolute Beginning", *Les*

Baden and myself is that he views the creation of the Proto-Pentateuch as a pre-literary development, while I attribute this to P. It might be helpful to point out that also for Noth, a sound documentarian, P was the basic document in the Pentateuch that provided the blueprint for its final shape: “Die also entstandene P-Erzählung ist später zur *literarischen Grundlage der Pentateucherzählung* gemacht worden. Der ‘Redaktor’ [...] hat [...] die P-Erzählung seiner Arbeit *zugrundegelegt* und sie durch jeweils an Ort und Stelle passende Einfügung von Teilen jener anderen Erzählung *bereichert*”³⁶.

To deem P to be the creator of the Pentateuch’s storyline not only results from what the textual findings suggest, but also allows for the composition of the Pentateuch to be interpreted along the lines of the rest of the biblical literature. In no other case within the Bible do scholars assume that the final shape of a book is a reproduction of its initial shape. The Documentary Hypothesis suggests that the concept of the Pentateuch’s narrative flow is as old as the Pentateuch itself. In the book of Isaiah or in the Psalms, for example, no one would propose that the logic of the final shape of these books need be presupposed for its earliest stages as well. Of course, in the historical and literary world, there always can be exceptions. But we should not posit exceptions unless it is absolutely necessary, and the textual evidence in the Pentateuch, in my opinion, does not compel us in such a direction.

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dernières rédactions du Pentateuque, de l’Hexateuque et de l’Ennéateuque (eds. T. RÖMER – K. SCHMID) (BETL 203; Leuven 2003) 99-128 = IDEM, *Die Patriarchen und die Priesterschrift*. Gesammelte Studien zu seinem 70. Geburtstag. Les patriarches et le document sacerdotal. Recueil d’articles, à l’occasion de son 70e anniversaire (eds. J.-D. MACCHI – T. RÖMER – K. SCHMID) (ATANT 99; Zürich 2010) 13-42.

³⁶ Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte*, 11 [emphasis by Noth].

SUMMARY

This paper is a response to Joel Baden's article, which claims that the material in Genesis and Exodus was already literarily connected within the independent J and E documents. I suggest an alternative approach that has gained increased acceptance, especially in European scholarship. The ancestral stories of Genesis on the one hand and the Moses story in Exodus and the following books on the other hand were originally autonomous literary units, and it was only through P that they were connected conceptually and literarily.